

A JUBILEE ODE

("Hail Native Manitoba")

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A CHRISTMAS CAROL

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A NEW YEAR WASSAIL



Three Poems

By

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## A Christmas Carol

C1930  
Comes holy Christmas-tide again  
And magi from afar,  
Balthazar - Gaspar - Melchior  
Are following their star:

I pray they pass thy very door  
With gifts of gold and gem  
And bid thee join their caravan  
To visit Bethelhem.

There where mild-mannered oxen sleep,  
Toil-wearied, taking rest,  
A peasant mother may'st thou find  
With first-born babe at breast.

I pray thy very ears may hear  
The herald angels sing:  
I pray thy very eyes may see  
God's glory bourgeoning.

## **"Hail Native Manitoba"**

### A Jubilee Ode

(Written on the occasion of the Province taking over  
her Natural Resources—the 15th, of July, 1930.)

*There where a hundred leagues of rock and pine  
A thousand lakes all crystal-pure entwine  
That stretch, like gleaming pearls, chain after chain  
Westward to greet a hundred leagues of plain;  
One hand out-stretched to mighty Churchill's mouth  
The other kissed by warm winds of the South;  
Dowered this day with more imperial state  
Guarding unarmed an ever-open gate  
Like ancient Janus, scanning East and West,  
But all unlike stern Janus for the rest,  
There lies the land my fancy loves the best  
Or in rich summer robes, or by rude Winter drest.*

*Surely some native bard shall homage pay  
Dear Manitoba on thy natal day  
To thee whose praises are but little sung,  
Save by the wild goose with his clamorous tongue  
As from far South cleaving long leagues of sky  
He leads his lusty legions loud and high,  
Or, bravely breasting autumn's sleet and rain  
From the dim North marshals them South again;  
He and his fellow creatures of the wild  
Know well thy joys unsullied, undefiled;*

*Taste the rare wine of thy clear April days,  
Drink in the magic spell of autumn's haze;  
List, in between, to many a fairy flute  
Of feathered piper; while alone stand mute  
Thy native sons, and for a sweet refrain  
Of voyageurs and hunters of the plain  
Borrow a stranger's cadence, word by word,  
Singing, entranced, of Mission-bells unheard,  
Of long Red River links, his paddle never stirred.*

*Let those who glory in a Southern clime  
Vaunt if they will eternal summer-time;  
To every Northland dweller far more dear  
The sweep of varied seasons through the year  
That in an endless panoramic flow  
Majestic as the heavens, come and go,  
Blow on our foreheads the sweet breath of spring  
Woo us with birds in summer carolling,  
Bind gorgeous autumn garlands in our hair,  
And spread for us incomparable fair  
League after league of ermine coverings  
Down shaken from white Winter's snowy wings  
And wrought to beauty rare by his rude buffetings.*

*Let dotards pamper those of timid moods  
But Spartan mothers still for Spartan broods;  
What sturdy son or daughter loves the less  
Our Winter King for his robustiousness;  
Each blast that shakes the frost-engraved pane*

*Stings into glowing health each sluggish vein;  
Spreads crystal mantles over silver lakes  
For joys no languid Southerner partakes:  
And when, grown weary of his boisterous mirth  
How doubly welcome fireside and hearth:  
Close fast the shutters; firmly bolt the door;  
Tho' fires are blazing brightly heap on more;  
Let storm-kings bluster louder so louder birch logs roar.*

*And soon beneath old Boreas' very heels  
Anemones shall purple all the fields;  
Oh! rare, rare day of the returning Spring  
Fairer by far for their coy tarrying  
Whose subtle alchemy o'er-night doth know  
To fashion sea-blue waves from foam-white snow;  
Spreads countless lakelets, over countless leas  
To dance brief days out to her piping breeze,  
Ere warm caresses of a summer sun  
Woo them to clouds again one after one;  
Fanned by such breezes on such fairy lakes  
How stately the resplendent mallard takes  
The ridging waves athwart his bronzed breast;  
How proud yon grebe, tossing his gaudy crest!  
While from the willowed margin of the shore  
The red-winged blackbird doth for evermore  
In crystal notes as clear and pure and sweet  
And liquid as the water at his feet  
Reiterate in sheer ecstatic glee*

*His soft inimitable "Konk ker chee"  
And, rare times, all majestic overhead,  
Their wealth of snow-white pinions wide outspread  
To gather in high heaven's faintest breeze  
Like phantom galleons sailing phantom seas,  
The whooping cranes float on unruffled wings  
And wake far meadows with their trumpetings  
Which echo gathers up and ever wider flings.*

*When Spring departing bids us fond farewell  
Summer in turn takes up the enchanter's spell;  
Huge raucous wings may hurtle through the sky  
Where creaking ox-carts crawled short years gone by  
Yet all unheeding fashion's last decree  
Summer still plies her ancient wizardry  
Of blade and ear and fully ripened corn;  
Drab fields at night; flax blossoms in the morn;  
Strews wantonly her wild flowers o'er the leas  
Rarely and richly nectared for the bees;  
No far-off Kashmir vale perfumed so rare  
As when wolf-willow fragrance haunts the air  
Clinging full fain to every little hill  
Like Indian place-names to our hamlets still;  
No jungle tiger in the Bengal night  
Burns with a fiery radiance half so bright  
As when the tiger-lily's vivid hue  
From sudden slopes bursts into gorgeous view  
All flaming orange beneath June skies above rare blue.*

*And what a peerless painter Autumn is  
When eyes that see view her wide canvasses;  
Can any magic Turner may command  
Tint Autumn's leaves, by Autumn's breezes fanned?  
When league on league her woodlands are unrolled  
Scarlet and bronze; orange and saffron gold;  
Can glowing Titian tresses all outspread  
Match Autumn's heavens when the day has fled  
And west winds lash the cloud-wrack as it flies  
And the red sun in glory ere he dies  
Sheds his last drop of blood to crimson prairie skies.*

*These be thy round of glories feebly sung  
That bind thy children to thee old and young;  
Charms spread alike for vagabonds and kings  
Above man's strife and petty bickerings;  
Time may not tarnish them; use shall not dim  
So fill the wassail-beaker to the brim—  
"Hail, hundred leagues of lakeland and of pine  
"Hail, hundred leagues of wheatland, thine and mine,  
"Hail, in the South a hundred sun-lit leas;  
"Hail, in the boundless North, a hundred seas;  
"Hail, hills between, of silver and of gold,  
Of precious stones, and riches manifold  
Whose lordly rivers, surging to the sea  
Join with thy sons and daughters loyally,  
Singing with them a Hymn of Jubilee.  
"All Hail, Dear Native Manitoba, Hail, all Hail to thee."*

### A New-Year Wassail

*O, friendship is a shelt'ring tree  
Whose roots through years strike deeper  
A resting place for you and me  
As braes beyond grow steeper:*

*Fill brimming up yon wassail-cup  
A New-Year troth be plighted  
"Friends still are we, friends still shall be  
Till journey's end is sighted."*







